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## **Maine Office of the Public Advocate Warns North American Power Customers to Get Off Variable Rates**

**Hallowell, Maine - September 23, 2014**

The Maine Office of the Public Advocate is warning customers of North American Power that their fixed rate contracts for electricity have expired, or will soon expire, and they should act now to avoid paying hundreds of dollars in excess electricity costs this winter.

Earlier this year, North American Power sent a direct mail solicitation to residential electricity customers across the state, offering a 6-month fixed rate for electricity at a favorable price. Thousands of Central Maine Power and Emera Maine customers signed up for these offers, which have now ended or are about to end. When the fixed rate term expires, customers are automatically rolled over to a variable rate, where the price changes each month based on wholesale market prices. Last winter, some variable rates went as high as 25 cents per kWh, or nearly four times the standard offer price, costing some customers hundreds of dollars in excess costs. The Office expects to see similar variable rate pricing, or worse, this winter.

“North American Power is supposed to let customers know their contract is expiring, but we know some customers haven’t gotten notice, and we’re concerned that those who have received notice may not understand the potential costs of switching to a variable rate.” said Public Advocate Tim Schneider. “Missing that single piece of mail could cost a customer hundreds of dollars this winter.”

The Office of the Public Advocate recommends that customers of North American Power take the following steps:

- Call or email North American Power to find out when your contract expires, by phone at (888) 313-9086 or via email at [customercare@NAPower.com](mailto:customercare@NAPower.com).
- If you are already on a variable rate, ask North American Power to immediately switch you to the standard offer. For any switch to the standard offer, there is no need to wait for the next “meter

read” date: the utility must process the change within two business days of being asked. If your fixed rate plan has not yet expired, ask that the switch occur on the date that plan expires. You can also make the switch by calling your utility (CMP or Emera Maine) directly.

The standard offer is always a fixed rate that changes just once a year, on March 1. For customers interested in switching to another competitive supplier, the Office of the Public Advocate maintains a website, updated monthly, which lists the prices offered by major suppliers and tips for choosing a supplier at <http://www.state.me.us/meopa/utilities/electric/supply.html>.

The Office of the Public Advocate is the state agency charged with representing the interests of Maine utility customers.

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